[P.382, 8]

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"This prayer" fella [Captain Jim] lived at Double Springs all year round. He would have a dream telling him when to have a meeting. He was what you would call a religious man. He would get someone he could trust and send out a long, tanned string of hide with knots in it. For every day until the meeting there was a knot and every day the messenger untied a knot so the people would know how many days they had until the meeting.

"All the men came and hunted for four days, and the women would start gathering pine nut. They would hang up the game to let it dry.

"The prayer wouldn't eat meat during these four days but he could drink cold water, and some lady would cook him pine nut.

"Every night they would have a dance. On the fourth day everybody would bring the food they had and put it in front of the prayer, and then he would pick some man who was fair [just] and the food was divided a little before sunrise. If you have a small family you get less, if you have a big family you get more."

[782]

"Then the prayer makes a prayer something like this: 'Our father I dream that we must take a bath and then paint. Even the childrens . . . [we must] wash away the bad habits so we won't get sick from the food we have in front of us!'

"Then everybody go to the river . . . no matter if there was a little ice on the water, and take a bath. If they was not near the river they bathed the kids from baskets at Double Springs. The prayer he prayed for pine nut, rabbit, and deer."

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Susie Dick, an ancient Washo woman who claims to have reached the century mark in 1950, recalls that Captain Jim was her mother's sister's son and that she called him brother. He was a big man in a figurative if not a literal sense. He wore eagle feathers on his head and arms. He had red trousers made out of a blanket with feathers on the sides of the legs. As she remembers him at these ceremonies: "He would scare you to death." The assembled Washo brought pine nuts, deer meat, mogal [Indian tea], and much other food. Captain Jim prayed and gave a sermon, urging everyone to drink water and avoid liquor, and supervised four nights of dancing.

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Judging from the age of these two informants, these meetings, which they claim were attended by all the Washo, were held between 1880 and 1900. Most Washo agree that these large meetings were the way "they did it in the old days." However, "the old days" appear not to be aboriginal but the late nineteenth century, when the Washo experienced a brief period of seminunity and prosperity.

[756]

Rupert, the psychologically oriented shaman comments, "Hell, them northern Washo didn't come down to Double Springs very much. They got their pine nuts southeast of Reno. Captain Jim he was only a big man to them Carson Valley Washo. He didn't have nothing to say to the northern bunch."

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Despite this, it seems clear that during the last part of the nineteenth century large numbers of Washo from the various areas did, in fact, gather at Double

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[124]

"Used in an adjectival sense. In the reference below prayer is used substantially.

"No matter how reluctant aged Washo may have been to discuss other aspects of the past, they became eloquent about any occasion on which food was plentiful. They describe in minute detail the kinds and amount of food at a feast although they cannot remember the times, place, or those present.

222 527 [178] Springs prior to the pine cutting. It seems equally clear that this was distinctly a postwhite phenomenon and that in aboriginal times such gatherings were much smaller.

[791] The essential elements of these pine-nut ceremonies are clear. There was a gathering of a number of bands, usually at the prompting of a dreamer who knew certain prayers and songs which would insure a successful harvest. There was a sharing of food among the celebrants, as well as dancing and co...ensial bathing. Such affairs were held in Sierra Valley and at Double Springs and probably at a number of other places in the pine-nut hills.

668 222 527 791 622 The large celebrations at Double Springs appear to have taken on a distinctly nativistic or revitalistic cast. Informants remember Captain Jim's exhortations to abstain from white man's whiskey, to treat each other as brothers and sisters, to eat Indian food, and to apply themselves to the business of hunting and gathering. He himself refused to wear new white clothing but accepted only used garments. It was during this period that Washo received individual pine-nut allotments based on their traditional picking grounds.

668 222 527 114 178 Mooney (1896), whose information on the Washo was filtered through the Paiute, reports the Washo during this period as a shattered remnant of a former society eking out an existence in the dump heaps of white settlements in Nevada. The fact that the Washo did not respond to the Ghost Dance seems in his mind to support his notions about the condition of the tribe. However, among older informants this period is invariably recalled as an almost golden age. Although the implications of movements such as the Ghost Dance were not clear in Mooney's time, it seems more than likely that the Washo failed to join the movement because they were not suffering the social and cultural dislocation of the Paiute, Plains tribes, or California Indians and, in fact, may have been undergoing a process of social unification under Captain Jim. This unification appears to have had its primary symbolization in the ritual activity which surrounded earlier ceremonies concerned with pine-nut harvesting. The use of a hide string to summon people to the meeting appears earlier as a war signal used by a threatened band to entreat other Washo (often not too successfully) to come to their aid.

[211] [721] 622 222 527 791 With the death of Captain Jim, the large gatherings at Double Springs appear to have ceased. In the words of one informant, "When he died all them things like the knotted string and that stuff died with him."

527 222 754 After his death the pine-nut dances continued to be held in various places in Washo country—Sugar Loaf Mountain, Genoa, and Sierra Valley being the most frequently mentioned. Jim's daughter (or sister's daughter) who was married to the claimant Captain Pete and was the mother of the present claimant, Hank Pete, staged a number of dances around Genoa until her death. This action is of interest in view of the fact that she was considered a dangerous woman and a poisoner. It

[756] suggests that there was in fact no clear distinction between doctors and witches or sorcerers. Her knowledge of pine-nut prayers and songs made here essential in the

9. Fish hook of bone with fiber cord. 227
10. Tule boat and long wood pole. 501
11. Snares. 324
12. Traps (ttpakmal(t), especially the rockfall type for small rodents. [411]
13. Wooden club, for rabbits primarily.
14. Rabbit and fish net (diqush) of fiber cordage. [283]
15. Antelope drive fences (muqiqush) and corral. [229]
16. Obsidian or cane blade knife (tegil).
17. Broken cobble chopper. 412

E. Food processing implements.
1. Bedrock mortar (lam) and stone pestle (ttts(k), see Plate III.
2. Metate (d(mgt) and mano (gamum).
3. Seed storage pits (damyeo) and mounds, particularly for pinenuts. 251
Plate II, B illustrates a pinenut cache. 252
4. Roasting pit. Plate II, A shows pinenuts roasting.
5. Digging stick (diahu). 412
6. Hooked (beyuqum) pinenut gathering pole (bih(?). [413]
7. Sticks to lift hot cooking stones (golang) into the cooking basket.
8. Looped (haleo) or paddle (haaa) stirring stick used to remove stones from the cooking basket. 415
9. Skin and animal stomach bags (tash(p). 412
10. Soaproot brush (ttgumbeyut) or comb (ttwega). 482
11. Carrying net.

F. Other manufactures.
1. Stone pipe (de(k) used with a skin tobacco bag (bankush tash(p). 276
2. Bone and willow whistles. 534
3. Cocoon rattle (diyu angal).
4. Shaman's kit.
5. Puberty ceremony staff of elderberry wood (ha du? cuhu?). 756
6. Ball of skin (mugiahua) filled with sagebrush bark used in a football game.
7. Bat and rope used in a game. 481
8. Dice (hoko?), counters, and small sticks used in hand games. See Plate V, C. 526 524
9. Top made of a stick and pine pitch.
10. Toy sling.
11. Buckskin calendar string with a knot to be untied each day until specific event begins (halogo). 241

For information on food, water, and medicines see pp. 20-21. 440

Clothing and Ornamentation

Most of the year the Washo went barefoot and practically nude. A breechclout for the men and a front apron for the women was universal. Beyond that 291

The word also denotes the implements used in curing.

A curing ceremony usually lasted four nights although it was sometimes reduced to two. The rites were the same each night. For the first three nights, the shaman would stop around midnight; on the final night he continued until dawn. The shaman's techniques consisted largely of smoking, singing the songs he had received from his wegeléyu, praying, and finally sucking out the cause of the disease. This might be an insect, a pine nut, a small piece of bone, or some other small object. The shaman's paraphernalia included a rattle, a straight stone pipe, and, for at least one shaman, a bone whistle.

Two shamans were active among the Washo as recently as a few years ago. Today, only one remains alive, and he is an old man. When he dies, shamanism will disappear. Modern Washo medicine is a mixture of shamanism, white medicine, and curing through peyote meetings. Any or all remedies may be tried by a particular patient. The older people are reluctant to go to the government doctor, for they have a fear of being placed in the hospital. They tend to patronize the shaman and the peyote cult in preference to the white doctor. The peyotists, though sincere believers, also recognize the powers of the shaman and the white doctor and readily patronize either of them. The younger people, however, prefer modern medicine; and it is steadily displacing the other two methods of curing.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND LEADERS

Washo political organization was extremely simple. Settlements were minute; Lowie's informants said that they usually had only two to four huts (1939, p. 303). Each settlement was politically independent. Washo informants report the presence of tribal chiefs, but Lowie thinks that this was probably a recent development (1939, p. 303). The chief's sole function was to arrange dances and to make speeches exhorting the Washo to be good and to behave properly. Special headmen led the communal antelope, deer, and rabbit hunts. The antelope chief received his power in dreams; the other two hunting chiefs were secular officers.

The political organization of the modern Washo is more complex. They have adopted a written constitution and they elect a tribal council. Yet this new complexity is largely nominal, for the council exercises little real power and each family does pretty much as it pleases. The chief responsibilities of the council are to manage the small amount of tribal property and to maintain the water supply in Dresslerville, Nevada. Though these are relatively simple matters, the council handles them quite ineptly. Factional fights and personal antagonisms block any really effective council action. The older people, who run the council, seem incapable of dealing with the important problems which face the modern Washo; and the younger people appear to take little interest in council affairs. In short, the Washo have not yet developed an effective political organization.

WARFARE

Warfare seems to have been waged under the leadership of any renowned fighter. The leader collected his

band by sending a messenger around the country carrying a knotted cord (ha'lé·ge). The knots represented the number of days remaining until the persons who wished to take part in the fight were to gather at the place of assembly, and the messenger untied one knot every day so as to keep track of the time that remained.

After the warriors had assembled, they engaged in a war dance which lasted four or eight nights. During this period, they manufactured bows and arrows. The arrows were smeared with rattlesnake poison obtained by letting a rattlesnake strike a piece of deer meat. The war dance was a kind of test and training for warfare. A man demonstrated by vigorous dancing that he was strong and fit to go to war; and the dance itself consisted of sudden, jerking movements as if one were dodging arrows. The war dance resembled the pine-nut dance in that features of both dances imitated the coming activities: in the war dance, men danced with bows and arrows and acted as if they were at war; in the pine-nut dance, people carried their implements for gathering and cooking pine nuts. Several taboos were observed during the period of the war dance: (1) men and women were forbidden sexual intercourse; (2) warriors could not eat meat and salt; (3) pregnant women could not throw their shadows on men engaged in dancing and they could not touch the bows and arrows.

Shamans who accompanied the war party served two functions: they called on their supernatural power to keep the enemy and his dogs asleep during the assault; and since they were specialists in herbal medicine, they treated the wounded. The shamans also selected the night for the attack. While the Washo were surrounding the enemy camp, the shamans became very intent on their praying so that none of the enemy should awake. The Washo then entered the camp of the enemy, set fire to their huts, and killed them with clubs and arrows as they emerged. Everyone was killed, even small babies.

When the Washo returned, they had a dance which lasted two or four nights. Lowie reports that men and women danced over the capture of the scalp of the enemy regarded as the best fighter. The scalp was tied to the top of an eight-foot, peeled, willow pole, which everyone except young girls seized and shook. The people finally burned the hair of the scalp and then went home (Lowie, 1939, pp. 229-230). My informants omitted mention of the scalp, but said that an important feature of the dance after the fighting was a ritual bath. This was necessary before the warriors could eat or have intercourse with their wives. The Washo apparently were militarily superior to the Miwok and the Maidu on the west, but they found the more numerous Paiute on their eastern border more formidable opponents. The fact that the Paiute obtained horses earlier than the Washo would also have given the Paiute some superiority in warfare.

721 622 [203] [211] 721 535 [44] [825] [834] [262] [263] [843] 726 756 789 727 [783] 726 [234]

SUMMARY

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Aboriginal Washo culture may be thought of as a blend of Californian and Great Basin cultural traits. Heizer and Elsasser (1953, p. 4) note the following ties with California:

> . . . the conical dwelling made by piling up bark slabs; semi-subterranean assembly house; "community" or bedrock mortar; emphasis on coiled

755 178 756 (1941, 413-14). Although the rite itself has changed but slightly since white contact and the shaman is a respected figure and widely patronized, the shaman's curing rite is on the point of disappearance because the shamans themselves are dying out. Only one remains and he was born in 1885.

The Pinenut Dance

527 791 824 222 [787] [782] [535] One special man, says Hank Pete, dreamed about pinenuts and prayed for them. He was not a shaman but he had power (see Freed and Freed, 1963). He prayed that the pinenuts increase in number and not be full of worms. This man was the leader of the pinenut dance and was the person who decided whether the pinenuts were ready for picking. If people were to pick the pinenuts without the leader's consent, says Pete, the nuts would be wormy and rotten.

222 824 527 [791] [462] [211] [624] Pinenuts were probably the most important single food of the Washo. The pinenut dance (gumsalal?ai) was held in the fall of the year before the pinenut harvest. The leader called the people together in Double Springs Flat by sending around a knotted cord. The knots represented the number of days remaining before the ceremony was to begin. The messenger untied a knot every day as he traveled about calling people. As the people assembled, the leader of the communal rabbit hunt gathered as many people as possible for a large rabbit drive, and outstanding hunters would organize communal deer hunts. The hunting drives lasted four days after which the Washo began the pinenut dance.

526 527 [515] [525] [416] The pinenut dance lasted four nights. Each morning everyone had to take a bath. During the day the Washo engaged in a variety of games and races, all accompanied by heavy gambling. People of different moieties opposed each other in the games. The most popular games were men's football, a ball race, foot races, archery contests, the hand game and women's shinny. Usually teams from the different moieties played each other in all the games.

Men's football was played on a field with goals at either end. The object was to kick a small buckskin ball between the two sticks forming the goal. Five or six men played on a side. The game began with the throwing of the ball between the two teams in the middle of the field. Wrestling was allowed in the football game. One goal won the game.

The ball race was also played by men. Two teams arranged themselves in straight lines at right angles to a line between the paired sticks forming the goal. Each team had a ball which at the start of the game was in the possession of the team member at the end of the line farthest from the goal. The

9: d'Azevedo et al. E-4,5 (1952-1961) 1963 NT20 Washo NT20

Northern Paiute NR13

Thus the area in which the Washo lived was somewhat more varied than the territories of other groups, encompassing four life zones. This contrasted to the condition of the Paiute as a whole, where some bands existed in relative luxury for gatherers, and others occupied extremely inhospitable areas. The Washo, as a whole, enjoyed a fairly favorable area for hunting and gathering. In aboriginal times there seems to have been little effort to drive other groups out of the area when they entered it to hunt or gather, suggesting that the Washo felt they were amid plenty and that added exploitation would not deprive them. This does not hold for their view of the pinenut areas they utilized. They defended these with vigor, as they also defended fishing sites. There appears to have been a sufficient supply of nuts to permit very large gatherings in the fall at the beginning of the harvest season.

As with the Paiute, the Washo family appears to have been the primary unit of social organization. Families combined into bands that may or may not have had more permanence of membership than did those of the Paiute. Informants insist that families decided the course of their yearly movement independent of any band activities, either joining other bands or going on hunting and gathering treks -- often as far as the Pacific coast -- by themselves.

Band leaders had little, if any, more authority than did their counterparts among the Paiute. When bands gathered for antelope or rabbit hunting a shaman or rabbit boss took charge of the actual hunting operation as was true elsewhere in the Basin. Mountain sheep and mule deer were hunted in small informal groups, the latter occasionally in communal hunts.

The Washo recognized different areas within their territory but to what degree people or bands remained within these territories is not known. Lowie (1939, 301-52) sees incipient moiety formation in this division, but its only expression appears to have been the selection of members of teams to play games during the annual pinenut festival. Certain groups living in the mountains near what is today Woodfords were viewed by other Washo as "crazy," i.e., particularly brave, unpredictable and fierce. This was because, according to informants, these people had a great deal of association with California tribes (Downs, 1961b). The Woodfords group appears to have served traditionally as Washo "shock troops," being called upon for help whenever it was necessary to fight neighboring Indians. Freed (1960, 353) reports that a leader could assemble fighting men by sending a knotted deerhide string to his supporters. My own informants corroborated this but made it clear that no one was compelled to respond. There is no record of interband hostility even to the degree mentioned above for the Paiute.